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Liberty

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Liberty.

A Study in Comparative Philology.

by

C. Robertson Honey. M.A. Oxon.

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Liberty.

A Study in Comparative Philology.

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C. Robertson Honey. M.A. Oxon.

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Note.

The references in the following pages (unless otherwise stated) are to a work by the Author bearing the title of:- The Egyptian Hieroglyph - Its original function in the Evolution of Language. Fourth Edition. 1911.

It comprises two Volumes [with a third to follow], and contains over fifteen hundred pages.

As an example of such references, the following is taken at random from page 5 :-

(II. page 535, line 18 - page 541).

While they throw much light on the matter in hand, these references are not indispensable to the reader of the present brief treatise. He can make his way to the end without them.

C. R. H.

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concern with either of the terminations -tas, and -er. Loeb is the element with which we have to deal. Loeb is an ancestor of Līber and Lībertas. By way of parenthesis, we remark that the long i (ī) in Libertas, &c, becomes the short i (ĭ) in Lĭbido (Unrestrained, or, Unregulated Passion), and in Lĭbet (It Pleases). The Romans fell into the same practice in pronouncing Lĭbido and Lĭbet which English people follow in pronouncing Lĭberty. Fidelity to the ancestry of Liberty requires that it Should be pronounced Līberty. The long i (ī) is at once explained. It is a descendant of, and, an equivalent of, oe in Loeb. Līb is clearly a variation of Loeb. The change from oe to ī is due to a tendency in almost every word of every tongue to vary its form and its pronunciation, in different lands and in different ages. We need only to point to the Spelling and pronunciation of words in Chaucer's works, and compare them with words of the present day to Show this tendency. But let us Submit Loeb to a yet closer analysis and dissection. Can this element, Loeb, be still further reduced, without

any loss to its essential meaning. If we deprive the Greek λείβω (I pour forth) of its pronominal termination, —ω, we may proceed on the hypothesis that our element Loeb is virtually identical with λειβ, and that oe in the Latin Loeb is a mere dialectic variant of the Greek ει in λείβω. If, moreover, we can prove that Loeb has within it the meaning:- Pour forth, then that conclusion will prove the truth of our hypothesis. Its truth is considerably strengthened by the fact that λοιβή (A pouring forth, A libation) has the element λοιβ which is the equivalent of λειβ in λείβω. Between the Latin Loeb and the Greek λοιβ, there is practically no difference. We may, therefore, with some confidence, proceed on the assumption that the Latin Loeb is identical with the Greek λειβ in λείβω. But, it is well known that εἴβω (I pour forth) is the Epic equivalent of λείβω. The initial λ therefore, is not necessary to λείβω. If our hypothesis be true, the initial L is not necessary to Loeb. The L may be removed from Loeb, and the λ from λειβ without any material loss of meaning. As a prefix, L, or, λ, may have, and

probably has, a philological value, as the terminations —er in Liber, and —tas in Libertas may have certain meanings of their own. Presently, we shall have something to say of the prefix λ, or, L. For the moment, let us remove it. There remains the simple element ε/β with its equivalents o/β and the Latin Oeb. We have now a fair presumption that, although the letter L in Liberty may have a meaning, it may be separated without any loss of meaning to the remaining element $\dot{\dot{\text{e}}}$b. This element $\dot{\dot{\text{e}}}$b in Liberty is the equivalent of the ancient forms Oeb, o/β, ε/β. Can we trace back $\dot{\dot{\text{e}}}$b, &c., to their origin beyond which we cannot go? A pure picture tongue must in its earliest stages be a primitive tongue. In successive ages it may vary in its written forms, in its meanings, in its pronunciations. In it we at length arrive at the beginning of written language which naturally involves, and implies, a spoken language. Of all the picture tongues known to us, the Egyptian is the most complete. It retains the pictures in their original forms. It has very few cursive characters. We refer neither to hieratic nor to demotic texts, but

to the pure and simple hieroglyphs.

1.

Let us interrogate figure 1. For the information of the reader who is not acquainted with Egyptian we must give a short preliminary explanation of the signs here used. We see at once that is a picture of waving, flowing Water. It denotes the water of the Nile. The triple sign, , means:- All the water which, for the time being, is under consideration (U. page 535, line 18 - page 541). The hieroglyph is a picture of a jar, or bottle, lying down (Job. xxxviii. 37. Revised version, Margin). In this position it is discharging water. The jar denotes the idea of Storage. Aristides (Orat. Egypt. Vol. ii) remarks that the Egyptians are the only people who preserve water in jars (Rawlinson. Edt. ii. 19. Note).

2.

No hand holds the bottle, or jar, as in fig. 2. The Pouring forth is, therefore, unrestrained and unregulated. It seems as if the bottle were inexhaustible (D. pages 70 - 73). In fig. 3 we see a picture of a Store ( ) of all the water ( ).

3.

It is very interesting to note that the jar

is associated with heaven ( ), as in fig. 4. 4. The hieroglyph is a drawing of a section of an ordinary ceiling (D. 2; Z. 1; Z. 24. 25; y. 22). The couplet in fig. 4 signifies:- A storage of water ( ) above the sky ( ).

5.

The remarkable idea of Bottles in heaven was not peculiar only to the Egyptians and Hebrews. In Chaldæa, Gilgames, who was exalted among the gods, and was placed near the Sun in heaven, was represented in heaven as in fig. 5. He is watering a celestial ox (Dawn of Civilization. Maspero). The bottle in his hands bears a close resemblance to that in fig. 4. From it two streams of water flow. One supplies the ox. The other is the spring of a pebbly river flowing at the feet of Gilgames. The scene tells us clearly that the flow of the water is continuous and inexhaustible. In this respect the bottle is like ((fig. 1). The scene also tells us that there is a river in heaven, as the Egyptians be-

lieved that there was a celestial Nile. This was also a part of the Semitic creed, (See Z. 5; Z., Pages 103, 104). for the Hebrews too believed in a river in heaven (Ps. xlvi. 4). For a fuller analysis of the pictorial description of heaven ( ), the reader is referred to the chapter on Heaven (Z. 1-8a) and to the chapter on the Mn (a. 6-9a). The hieroglyphic group in fig. 6 denotes:- All the storage of water (. Compare page 5, lines 8-10) in heaven, or, to speak more literally, above the sky ( ). We must not forget that denotes the abstract idea of Storage (page 5). The constant use of the number Three in the Egyptian texts is a matter of great interest, and has been fully discussed in the work already referred to. The original idea in the minds of the Egyptians associated with the bottle ( ) is that it is a Sacred Reservoir. Whence did the water come to fill it? The legend of Isis is well known (D. page 63, line 13 - page 70, line 1). The tears shed by her in heaven are precious, for they are shed over her husband's grave at Philæ. They are stored in a bottle ( ) The hieroglyphic group signifies:- All the storage of the tears shed

6.

by Isis in heaven. The associated ideas of the Bottle and the Tears are clearly embodied in the prayer of the Semitic patriarch:- Put my tears into thy bottle (Ps. Lvi. 8). According to the Legend, the tears of Isis are shed annually. That the legend took a powerful and enduring hold upon the imagination of the Egyptians is attested by the fact that the hieroglyphic texts teem with pictorial illustrations of it. (D. Da etc..).

In interpreting the hieroglyph we must clearly bear in mind that, whatever subsequent uses in language it may have served, the original idea associated with it was that of water issuing from its storage above the skies. The eye of Isis is the spring whence the water takes it rise. The fount of the tears is unfailing, for, according to the legend, the grief of Isis lives for evermore. The flow of the tears derives perpetual impulse from within her soul,—the rushing soul which discloses itself in rushing tears. This inner fount is best described by the Greek word Θυμός (That which rushes [E 15] That which sacrifises). It lives for ever within the breast of Isis the Immortal. Before, and at, the point of issue it is Free. It knows no bars, no fetters.

This θυμός is the seat where Liberty, in its pure, unclouded form, and majesty, holds its court. Though it be banished from the whole universe, there is the home of Freedom - For, while man survives, Liberty lives within him too. It discloses itself to his fellow man in passionate act and speech.

Now see what happens. There is absolute unqualified Liberty for Thought. But, for the expression of Thought, Liberty is not absolute. Every word uttered, and every act done, flows within the banks of law and custom, which restrain and regulate the doings and the speech of men. Liberty without law works desolation. Homer tells us that the springs rushing from their mountain source :-

μινύθει δέ τε ἔργ' ἀνθρώπων (Il. xvi. 392
minish the works of men).

Liberty unqualified, unchecked, is attended with similar results. The water issuing from the reservoir ( ) in heaven becomes the celestial Nile. The river begins at once to flow within its banks, and its ordered Liberty bestows blessings throughout its entire course. At the mouth of this bottle we encounter two great ideas: Natural Liberty of Thought and Feeling, and Civilized Liberty

qualified by the wisdom gathered from the experience of mankind. Before, and while, the tears of Isis have a place in the bottle, they represent the unrestricted exercise of Liberty of Thought and Feeling. When they leave it, they come directly under the control of the banks of the celestial Nile. Hence the hieroglyphs in fig. 1 ( ), denoting, All the water ( ) pouring out of the reservoir ( ), become an adequate pictorial expression for Liberty. Here it must be observed that the Egyptian monuments are silent. They offer no evidence that the Egyptians regarded the hieroglyphs as a pictorial expression for the abstract idea of Liberty. But, all the monuments, in their aggregate, are only the fragments of the ancient Egyptian literature. This possible objection may, however, be raised, and will be considered a little further on.

Let us proceed to analyze the couplet . The hieroglyph is a picture of an outstretched arm and an open hand. Its obvious meaning is Give (T. 4a). As applied to the Nile Water ( ) which is poured forth ( ), it signifies that which is the most characteristic and noteworthy quality of the Nile.

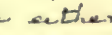
The flowing river not only holds the Mud. It gives the Mud. That is to say, the Nile Gives ( ) Egypt. For, without the Mud, held as a priceless possession, and bestowed as a Gift, there would be no Egypt. If, at any time, the river ceased to Give, Egypt would, in the course of years, cease to live. In picture form we find the Delta is represented as a gift. It is the τρίγωνος χθών Νειλῶτις (Æsch. Prom. 813. The three-cornered land of the Nile). It is Αἰγυπτίοισι ἐπίκτητός τε γῆ καὶ δῶρον τοῦ ποταμοῦ (Edt. ii. 5. Land gained by the Egyptians and a gift of the river: See fig. γ). The gift bestowed by the Nile (fig. γ) so impressed the minds of the Egyptians that they used the hieroglyph, , to signify the abstract idea of Giving (Vol. i. pages. 5. 6. 18). It struck the imagination of the Greek historian Herodotus who called it a δῶρον (A gift).

The remaining hieroglyph in fig. 1 is It is a picture of the human leg which appears to be separated from its companion leg. We observe that the foot is set firmly on the ground, that is to say, its owner has made, or, is in the act of making, a step, and no more.

Detached from the other leg, this leg can advance no further. When the Egyptians wanted to express the idea of a man moving forward continuously, they used for the purpose a picture of the man's pair of legs, 𓂝.

8. 𓂝𓀀 The couplet in fig. 8 means:- Stepping (𓂝) and going (𓀀). The phonetic value of 𓂝 is:- Ba, or, B. It is the equivalent of the Greek element βα in βαίνω. Like our word Step, the hieroglyph 𓂝 has developed its meaning until it merges into that of 𓀀. In the Greek βα, the idea of stepping still lingers (M. page 387). The phrases:- βάσκ' ἴθι (Step out and Go); βῆ δ' ἴμεν (He stepped out to go);* are the exact Greek equivalents of fig. 8. So also we have λὰξ ἐν στήθεσι βὰς (Hom. Il. vi. 65. With his heel stepping on his chest); εὖ διαβάς (Hom. Il. xii. 458. Making a long stride, and standing with legs apart). The Greek βαίνω, however, is used in the sense of Going. So also the English word Step is similarly used:- His flock before him stepping to the fold (Thomson); He stepped into the house. Hence the hieroglyph 𓂝 in fig. 1 (𓂝𓏏𓊪 〰) signifies the abstract idea of Going. The two hieroglyphs, 𓏏, and 𓂝, when they occur together in a

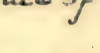
* So also βῆ δὲ θέειν; βῆ δ' ἐλάαν (Il. xi. 617; xiii. 27).

groups of hieroglyphs, appear sometimes as , and sometimes as in fig. 1. If there be any difference of meaning between the two couplets, the former means:- Giving and Going, while the latter means:- Giving in Going. Practically, there is no important difference, and one may be taken for the other. The translation, therefore, of fig. 1, (), is:- All the Water of the Nile ( ) pours forth ( ) and gives as it goes (). Before we proceed to consider the phonetic value of fig. 1, let us dwell for a moment longer upon its import. In the first place, it is clear that, in the group , there is a distinct and emphatic pictorial allusion to the Inundation of the Nile either above the sky () (fig. 4), or, in Egypt. (Compare page 9, lines 18-20) In their gaiamorphic conception of heaven, the Egyptians clothed it with characteristics similar to those of their beloved land (See . 2. 5), similar also to those which struck the imagination of the Hebrew poet (Psalm xlvi. 4). In Egypt, the Nile, and the Nile only, pours forth all its waters, covering the land over its entire length and breadth, and giving, fertility, fruitfulness, and prosperity,

as it advances. It is:- "A flood with such a heady current scouring" the land (Shakespeare). Ac=cording to the legend, the Nile descends fro... the Sky. Its Water, therefore, is Pure. The hieroglyph, , illustrates, and attests, its celestial origin (fig. 4) and its Purity. The river is composed of Pure Water, Pure Mud. No idea of filth, unwholesomeness, in=convenience, or disgust, was conveyed to the minds of the Egyptians by this Pure, Scouring, Flood of Water and Mud. Its Rush and Wash were, and still are, witnessed throughout the length and breadth of Egypt. Being Pure, it Cleanses Egypt. Possess=ing this heavenly purity, this cleansing power, it has unbridled Liberty to accomplish its work of bene=faction. The heaven-born, pure, cleansing, Water, in its form, and estate, has the perfect license of absolute Liberty. In its complete, unrestricted Liberty to Scour Egypt, it bestows incalculable blessings upon the Sons of men. We shall be tres=passing beyond the limits of this treatise, if we enter upon the exceedingly interesting enquiry as to the picture origin, and meaning, of the Latin words, Licco, Licentia, and of the English words, License,

Like, and Lick. If the reader of these pages has a wish to pursue that enquiry, he will find the analysis in Vol. ii (q. 5. page 508)

We have now arrived at the conclusion that the hieroglyphs, , in fig. 1, designate the abstract ideas :- Pouring forth, Scouring, Pure. But, they are associated with which, as we have seen, means:- One who Goes and Gives. The august, eternal, Goer and Giver is no less a being than the great Nile. The former idea of Pouring forth () is a noteworthy characteristic of the Goer and Giver (). and is, strictly speaking, an epithet of this Goer who Gives (). In ancient times, epithets were used, and recur, with great frequency. We have the phrase ἐϋκτίμενον πτολίεθρον (Il. ii. 501. Well-built citadel); βοῶν εὐρυμετώπων (Hes. Shield. 82. Broad-fronted oxen); μώνυχας ἵππους (Hom. Od. xv. 46. Solid-hoofed horses). The hero is κρατερός (valiant); the woman is ταναύπεπλος (long-robed), the Achæans are ἑλίκωπες (with glancing eyes); Oxen are εἰλίποδες (with shambling feet), &c., &c.. So also, in the case of fig. 1, we have (The Goer who Gives) (which Pours forth).

The phonetic value of , which is the name of the object upon which our interest and attention are fixed, is :- $\bar{A}b$. The phonetic value of  , which is an epithet of the object, is :- $Uāb$. These phonetic values have been assigned by the modern grammarian . Although the termination, , has a phonetic value , it is not uttered in fig. 1 . In this respect, it resembles many other hieroglyphs which are used as terminations. We have nothing to say here of the machinery of terms invented by the grammarians . The nature of our analysis is such that we do not need the use of any of them .

Moreover, the two phonetic values :- $\bar{A}b$, $Uāb$, in fig. 1, appear to be condensed into one . It is pronounced :- $\bar{A}b$, or $Uāb$, or, something that lies near them . Whether merged in each other, or, kept distinct , the course of our enquiry is not affected thereby . For, in any case , we have to deal with $\bar{A}b$ and $Uāb$. These two sounds denote either One who Goes and Gives , or , An Outpouring , A Scouring . And we can at once see that the Going and Giving on the one hand , and the Outpouring and Scouring on the other, mutually

imply each other, in the case of the river Nile.

We are now able to identify Uāb (: Outpouring) with the Greek elements ειβ and οιβ (in λείβω, εἴβω, λοιβή), which signify Outpouring.

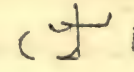
Can we identify Oeb (Liberta) with Uāb ( )

O is dialectically interchangeable with U both in Latin and Greek. (A. pages 42-44). A is dialectically interchangeable with E (η or ε). (See Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon; Andrews' Latin Lexicon). Hence Uāb (. Outpouring) becomes Oeb. In Sound they are identical, making due allowance for dialectic variation.

If we take the first part of fig. 1, namely , the phonetic value of which, according to the grammarians, is Āb, very similar variations of Sound occur. For, in Coptic, the couplet, (see page 12, line 22 - page 13, line 6), is ογβ (Oub). Here the ancient Ou is transformed into the Ā of the grammarian. Āb and Oub are identical.

9. Fig. 9 abbreviates fig. 1. It means: - Pouring forth ( ) and Going ( ). The Giving is implied, for the Gift comes in the Pouring forth. The phonetic value of fig. 9 is: Ueb.

According to the foregoing process of analysis, the Hāb of fig. 9 is identical with the Hāb of fig. 1, with the Greek εἰβ, οἰβ, and with the Latin Oeb (see pages 3, 4, 17).

The phonetic value of fig. 1 () is a double Oeb. And Oeb is the essential element in Loebertas, or, Libertas, and in Liberty.

We have now proved that the Latin Loeb is virtually identical with λειβ, that oe in the Latin Loeb is a dialectic variant of the Greek ει in λείβω, and that Loeb has within it the meaning:- Pour forth.

We have found where pure, unfettered, Liberty lives for ever (page 8). We have found where it is ordered and restrained. We have seen that Liberty, unrestrained in the heart, and mind, and soul, and thought, and Liberty, regulated by enlightened wisdom, are both fraught with untold good to mankind (page 9). One belongs to thought, the other to act.

How did this expression εἰβ, or, οἰβ, get into Greece, and Oeb into Italy? They belong to a large class of words which Homer styles ἔπεα πτερόεντα (Winged words). Like thistle-down in the wind, they take flight. They get into use among learned men (Compare Edt.

ii. 152, 154), merchants, colonists, pirates. They find a lodgment in many lands. We are unable to trace back the idea of Liberty to the Egyptians when they expressed themselves in fig. 1 ( ). They knew well enough, however, the essential meaning of this group. They certainly connected the hieroglyph , with the idea of Pouring forth, or, Libation (Pierret. Vocab. page 568, line 4).

The Greeks and Latins, no doubt, realized the idea of Liberty. The Latins saw in Oeb, not only an Out-pouring, but an idea of Liberty which was derived from, and necessary to the full understanding of, this Outpouring. (pages 8, 9, 10).

The use of the prefix, L, in Loebertas is illustrated by the use of the Greek, λ, in λείβω, which is said to be dialectical. We have seen that λ is not a necessary part of the word (page 3). Very probably this may be said of the L, in Liberty. The L, however, may have come from Egypt. Its equivalent is the hieroglyph, , which means:- To (F. page 182, line 3). The phonetic value of is R, or, L. It adds nothing of importance to the main ideas of Out-pouring, Going, Giving, Purity, Scouring, Liberty.

Conclusion.

The Liberty of the Nile with his Inundation bears three clear and striking marks. (i) His Out-pouring, Coming, and Giving, expressed the very Soul of Isis, the Lady of Philæ, the woman who wept annually and for ever over the shrine of her dead husband. Proceeding from her tears, the river was a perpetual token of her Thought and Love to those who believed in the legend. That Thought, that Love, were boundless and Free.

(ii) The river is under control. He flows within his channel. He obeys dykes, sluices, embankments. He is under restrictions. He has an ordered Liberty.

(iii). At stated intervals, he enjoys a boundless Liberty. He leaves his channel, passes through embankments, and laughs at the sluices. For the time being, he knows no law. He revels in absolute Liberty. His license means unspeakable blessings to Egypt. It is not the license of lust. It is the license of divine Love, free from bonds.

First and last, the Nile, in his Outpouring, and Coming, and Giving, represents a great idea, the blessing to mankind of the Liberty belonging to a Love which is pure, perpetual, and free.

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